

sisted by the White House representative, has always comprised the political staff of The Star, and with a well organized corps of special correspondents throughout the Union has supplied the readers of The Star with the news of politics.

Cosmopolitan Washington.

Washington, politically, is cosmopolitan. All political parties and every state of the national confederation are represented in Washington's citizenship, permanent and temporary. Essentially, therefore, it would be wise newspaper policy to present to this cosmopolitan audience a variety of political news, so that each colony could find in The Star something of interest about the politics in its own state.

The political correspondence of The Star of the present day, which in point of scope and range is not surpassed by that of any other newspaper in this country, has been built up within the past twenty years. It has grown by leaps and bounds within ten years.

Monday, prior to the last election, The Star published more than two full pages of political news, compiled by its staff and special correspondents. There were telegraphic dispatches, giving the unbiased, non-partisan judgment of capable political writers upon the outlook in many states. These dispatches were wired to The Star at the last moment and represented the best estimates of the men who expressed themselves. Comparison of election returns with prophecies shows that the forecasts were accurate. Moreover, those correspondents had been sending letters from their states for three weeks before the election.

The dispatches covered the political situation in these states: New York, West Virginia, Michigan, Connecticut, Maryland, Kentucky, Virginia, Indiana, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Illinois, Nebraska and California. The territory of Hawaii was represented in the same publication by a letter, for the reason that there is no cable connection with the islands.

The Staff Correspondent.

The system of reporting politics by staff correspondents has grown up within the past twelve or fifteen years. The theory is that a dispatch from a member of The Star's regular staff, permanent and known in the community, who writes over his own initials, attracts more attention than an unsigned letter. The regular readers of The Star get to know the man. He is on test, and the knowledge of that fact is a stimulant to him to do his best.

The Star, through its staff correspondents, has covered the field of politics in every state from Connecticut to Missouri, and from Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico. Its staff men have traveled over every state within the area thus circumscribed, familiarizing themselves each year with the political and economic conditions of the communities.

In addition, The Star has special correspondents in the big cities of all the states in the Union, resident men connected with the most prominent newspapers, who furnish dispatches when called upon. Whatever the political affiliations of these men may be, they must send unbiased political dispatches to The Star. A good newspaper man is a newspaper man first and a partisan afterward, so it is quite practicable to get non-partisan news.

The letter of final instructions sent to The Star's efficient corps of special correspondents, previous to the last election, by the managing editor, contained this injunction:

"The Star is independent in politics and your correspondence must be from an absolutely non-partisan standpoint. Of course, we want the probabilities as they appear, but in no wise biased."

When The Star's staff correspondents appear in distant states, as in Minnesota, Missouri, South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, etc., people sometimes say: "Is Washington interested in our politics?" Most assuredly, a portion of Washington's population is deeply interested, and as it is the purpose of The Star to serve every class of its subscribers, it is considered worth while to send a staff man on a special mission to those states, if events of a special character are happening. Not only that, but it is the custom of The Star to keep its staff men on the road in off years, when the elections are not so interesting, so that they may keep in touch with the politics and the leaders, and never lose their familiarity with the situation.

Some of the special correspondents, resident newspaper men of standing in their community and ability, who are members of The Star's big corps, have served the readers of this paper for ten years. The Star has a special correspondent in London, and gets periodically correspondence from Paris and other continental cities. Moreover, it has from time to time editorial correspondence from Egypt, the Philippines, Japan, China and South and Central America. For some years The Star's letters from Honolulu, signed "Kamehameha," have attracted national attention.

HOW THE WORK OF GATHERING WHITE HOUSE NEWS HAS CHANGED.

BY W. W. PRICE.

The development of news gathering at the White House in the last fifty years has probably kept pace with the kindred work in all other fields which a daily paper must cover. It is a field in which every reader of a paper is interested. Men want to know the position of the President of the United States on all important questions of the day. The fact that every man is a born politician makes him look to the center of the country's politics for every scrap of information that has a political bearing. The few men who care little for politics do care for and respect the President of the United States, or are interested to some extent in the chief executive's actions upon many problems, political and otherwise, that daily confront him for settlement.

The women find nothing of greater interest than to read of the movements of the mistress of the White House, of the social plans, of the visitors who call upon the President's wife, of the occasional receptions, the children, and the domestic matters that are of such nature as to permit publication. Comparatively few editors handling news at the desks of great newspapers reject an item of any value relating to the White House or its occupants.

This demand for detail—from both men and women—has been growing from year to year for many reasons. The country has grown immensely in fifty years, and the President's great power and duties have been consequently extended. People are studying more deeply the questions and governmental matters of the hour, and realize the enormous importance of the position of the chief executive in our own affairs and the affairs of the world. For the office itself,

volving upon him. So his secretary must come in contact with the people and act as a medium of communication for the chief executive.

The departments try to relieve the President of as much detail as possible, but there are many people who insist upon the democratic right of carrying a thing to the White House and putting it before the President directly. They are not satisfied with a decision reached by some department officer, or do not look upon him as unprejudiced toward them or their case. These people encounter the President's secretary when they go to the White House, and often must submit to his putting the matter before the President or advising them what to do. As the business of the country grows this system, or some other, will grow with it, out of sheer necessity. Ex-Senator Chandler has suggested that there ought to be two Presidents, so that one may relieve the other.

The Private Secretary.

Fifty years ago, therefore, the private secretary to the President was not a person of the importance to newspaper men he is now, and most of the reporters and correspondents of those days daily sought and obtained interviews with the Presidents. Then, as now, there were men whose personal relations were such as to admit them quickly to the chief executive, while others had to be content with obtaining their news supplies from senators or representatives or cabinet officers who had talked with the President. It was a rather democratic proceeding for the Presidents in the old days to talk directly with the newspaper men who called, and submit to being "held up" to answer all kinds of questions. Newspaper men nowadays have access to the President, but they do not intrude upon his privacy, except in cases of absolute necessity. They usually get all the information that is to be had by talking with the secretary or an assistant. They may see some one else who has seen the President and knows his views on a particular question. All newspaper men in Washington fully



NORTH FRONT OF WHITE HOUSE.

as well as for the men who occupy it, respect is deepening each day, and is being taught more thoroughly than ever before to the children who are coming up to citizenship. To this country the office represents so much bearing upon law and order, upon fairness and justice, and upon the gigantic possibilities of the future that everything pertaining to it naturally draws attention and rivets interest.

Half a Century Ago.

Fifty years ago newspaper reporters and correspondents went to the White House to see and talk with the President. If he was easy of approach and their acquaintance with him warranted it they probably went often, or at least as often as was necessary to keep in touch with the day's news so far as it related to the White House. The office of private secretary then was little more than that of an amanuensis. Today it is a position of influence and power, and there are times when the secretary to the President is almost as hard to see as the President himself. The President's duties have multiplied so fast that in the last ten years much of the detail of the office has had to be placed in the hands of the secretary. It would be manifestly impossible for the President to attend personally to the minutiae of a great portion of the work de-

realize the immense amount of work devolving upon the President, and the fact that he has few spare minutes. When, however, they need to reach the fountain head of news he is accessible.

In point of approachability and accessibility there isn't much difference between now and fifty years ago, as far as time has wrought changes, practically everything depending on the man who is President. Fifty years ago the duties of the office were not so pressing as to bring about such severe restrictions in securing interviews with the chief executive. These restrictions have gradually increased. Often they are born of necessity, sometimes caused by peculiar ideas. They surround and govern a President just to the extent that he may desire or that his time may admit. With President McKinley, for instance, the Spanish war bringing its multitude of additional duties and responsibilities, it was imperative to omit his program of three weekly receptions to the public in the east room of the White House.

President Roosevelt holds occasional receptions, limited in such a way as not to include more than forty or fifty people. These are held about the middle of the day, when most of the senators and representatives have paid their calls and the Presi-

dent is ready to receive others who have business with him. The reception takes place in the office, and the people received are generally those sent by members of Congress.

Reporting White House News.

Up to six years ago reporters and correspondents called at the White House at intervals through the day to see the President or his secretary, generally the latter, but there was not until that time an attempt to cover each detail and happening of the White House, as now. Reporters for The Star and other local and out-of-town papers varied their visits to suit their ideas or necessities of newsgathering. Frequently not one reporter or correspondent would be near the building when some important caller would visit the President and go away. Now the caller has no chance of getting in and out of the White House without being seen and interviewed by reporters. It may be that only one man may know him and surmise his business. But he is almost sure to have to give an account of himself. Thus the White House has become a regular assignment for reporters representing single newspapers or the press associations, who remain at or near the building during the business hours of the President and keep in pretty close touch with what is going on. The man familiar with the field possibly has an advantage over a new man in knowing the ropes and the people, and the relations of various persons with the President or with this or that project.

Searching for Clues.

As a matter of fact the news secured at the White House is nearly always the result of the efforts of the newspaper men themselves. It is generally not the policy of either the President or his secretary to make public any information. A hint of a "story" must be found before either will talk. Appointments and similar official changes are made public, but there is no giving out of prepared news. So the reporters and correspondents find it themselves. Their acquaintance with public men all over the country, with cabinet officers and departmental officials, enables them to get the first start or "tip." These same friends develop the story for them, upon inquiry. Sometimes it's a question of hard digging, as the miner puts it, to unravel a "story." If the matter is one of importance, and the President and his secretary and all others surrounding him are reticent, being anxious that the news shall not get out, the difficulties are increased. Then is when the regular reporter calls to mind this or that association of a body of men, this or that man's interest in a certain subject or certain man, or the probable reason of a man's being summoned by the President, and is thereby enabled to reach a clue.

It is to be assumed that the President of the United States, his cabinet and all others around him do not want matters to become public until they have been finally acted upon. Even when this has been done there is no man who feels that it is his particular business to announce the fact. After the President passes upon it the subject passes from his mind. Cabinet officers are similarly inclined. Therefore it is the business of the White House reporter not to be far behind when matters of import have received the approval or disapproval of the President or are waiting to be acted upon by him.

All callers at the White House are put through a cross-examination process by the newspaper reporters there. By this time it has become a rather familiar experience to most public men, and they generally submit to the buttonholing with good-natured patience.

President Roosevelt.

President Roosevelt himself is most accessible to newspaper men who need to see him. He knows how to talk with them and leave to their honor and good judgment the handling of what he may say to them. He talks freely on occasions and upon matters not in shape for publication in the newspapers, but his confidence is appreciated by the recipient, and weeks or months pass before a word of what has been said by the chief executive gets in print. While it is pleasant to the newspaper reporter thus to have the confidence of the chief executive or of a cabinet officer or member of Congress, he frequently regrets that he is the custodian of facts that he is prevented from using, inasmuch as some other man who has not been placed in a similar position is often at liberty to write the story whenever he has secured it from a source that does not place the inhibition of confidence on him. Many good stories get out to the world through men who are not thus held in restraint of good faith, while the man possessing official confidence may have had complete knowledge of the facts weeks before.

The needs of the newspaper staff assigned to the White House have been recognized in a satisfactory manner in the new office building just completed for the President. A room for the reporters has been reserved for them, with all the necessary